

The Gospel News

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General Church Conference

By Sister Carolynn O'Connor

When was the last time you attended a conference? It's an experience worth the planning, traveling, and money needed. The blessings of God are always abundant there! I had the privilege of attending a portion of the April Conference this year and there was reminded of the many reasons to go back. Here are five great reasons to go to Conference.

Reason 1: The Beautiful Sound of Hundreds of Brothers and Sisters Praising God in Song—There is nothing like lifting up your voice in song with so many. You can sing at the top of your lungs in praise and yet you are just a tiny part of the beautiful music. Those leading the singing, playing the piano, flute, guitar, or other instruments are always fantastic. You may even see an apostle pull out a harmonica and join in!

Reason 2: Sharing in the Lord's Supper—It's a privilege to share in the Lord's Supper with so many. To watch as the apostles pray and disperse into the crowd to offer the bread of life and wine for us to partake. Apostle John Griffith shared an experience that he had some time ago where he had a vision of a plate with individual pieces of bread that had not been passed out during communion. On each piece of bread was a person's name. As he thought about it, he realized that they were the names of people who had not committed and joined the Church. *"His body that was broken was for each individual, not just us. This is for all people. We desire to see everybody being brought to this table, that we might sup together,"* Brother John exclaimed after sharing the experience.

Reason 3: Unity and Purpose—When we all come together from different regions and unite, there is beauty in it. We are all different, and maybe even praise and worship God in different ways but when we come together with all of our talents, love, and desire to serve God and this Church, we make up one perfect body. It's a beautiful feeling, and so good to feel a part of the body. It reminds us of the true purpose of our existence and puts into perspective the trials and concerns of everyday life. Being at Conference also affords you the opportunity to learn more about what's happening around the Church. You learn about the projects and programs that take place in the General Church and auxiliaries, and about the missionary work taking place around the world. Apostle Paul Palmieri reminded us, *"He has given us the task to save the world because He has confidence in us that we will do the work and meet His requirements."*

Reason 4: Hearing Experiences Firsthand—We had the pleasure of hearing from Brother Bob Nicklow, Jr., just six months after his liver transplant. What a blessing to see firsthand the answered prayers! Brother Bob testified:

"People of God are a beautiful sight. First thing I want to say is that I am alive and I praise God. It's not about me. It's never been about me. It's about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Six months ago today, I was going from bad to worse and I knew unless the Lord intervened I would not make it through." He shared thoughts regarding how we don't always see when the Lord is intervening and may question, "Lord, have you forgotten me?"

Brother Bob shared a dream he had during his illness where the Lord allowed him to see himself with the three Hebrew children in the fire (Daniel Chapter 3). Flames were all around them, and one of the young men who seemed to be the leader said three times, *"Don't look at the flames. Look for the one like unto the Son of God!"* and when he looked, he saw the image of a Man through the fire. When Brother Bob returned home from his surgery, he had nightmares of being back in the hospital and one night woke up and, realizing he was actually in his own bed,

(Continued on page 4)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 H Have a happy joyful heart	3 A Appreciate all that you have	4 P Praise God daily	5 P Prepare your heart	6 Y Yield to His will	7
8 F Focus on the Lord	9 A Attend Church often	10 T Trust in the Lord	11 H Humble yourself	12 E Encourage others to come	13 R' Respect the Church	14 S Sing songs of praise today
15	16	17 D Donate your time and resources	18 A Always be prayerful	19 Y Yield not to temptation	20	21
22	23 D Devote your day to His work	24 A Acts of love are necessary	25 D Drop your doubt & discouragement	26 S Serve your Savior	27	28
29 Pray for the Creekside Branch pg 4	30	1	2	3	4	5

May 2014
S M T W T F S
1 2 3
4 5 6 7 8 9 10
11 12 13 14 15 16 17
18 19 20 21 22 23 24
25 26 27 28 29 30 31

July 2014
S M T W T F S
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27 28 29 30 31

June 2014

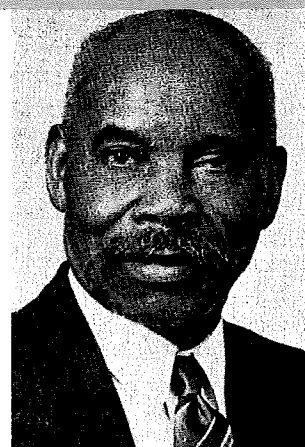
"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." (Exodus 20:12)

BFP Blast From The Past

Apostle John Penn

It was through an invitation to witness a baptism that John Penn was introduced to the Church – 107 years ago this month. Arriving late, though, he would miss the baptism. However, in returning home he was met by Brother Alexander Cherry who invited him to the afternoon service that same day at the Roscoe (Lucyville), Pennsylvania Branch. It would be over a year before John rendered obedience to the Gospel in July 1908. But within 9 months, he was ordained into the priesthood (on April 1, 1909), and in another 9 months an evangelist (on January 1, 1910). Only 6 months later (on July 1, 1910), Brother John would be the first African American ordained into the Quorum of Twelve Apostles "at a time in the nation's history (Evangelist Larry Watson described in *The Scattering of the Saints*) when segregation was commonplace in most of the nation's institutions." He remained active in the Quorum of Twelve from 1910 to his passing in 1955, and was instrumental in bringing the Gospel to the first Italian Americans.

Apostle John Penn ►



June 2014

HAPPY FATHERS DAY

TO ALL THE DAD'S
AND SPIRITUAL FATHERS

Purpose • Mission • Vision

Purpose Statement

- To fulfill the plan of God by bringing salvation through Christ to all people.

Mission Statement

- The Church of Jesus Christ will teach the Gospel to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things commanded by Jesus Christ.
- To draw Israel to Christ through an effort focused on the Native Americans of North and South America.

Vision Statement

- The full manifestations of God's Spirit and power among the Saints, resulting from living and worshipping in unity and righteousness, stimulate continuous growth of the Domestic Church—even at a rate of doubling over a five year period—while strengthening the International Church.

THE CHURCH OF
Jesus Christ

Word Up

The Case For Christ: Holding The "Word Up" By Elder Doug Obradovich

*Is reading scripture difficult for you?
Do the "thees" and "thous" make Christ's words seem irrelevant, even losing their potency in translation?
Let's take a deeper dive into Jesus' message and see if we can make sense of it all.
If successful, let's agree to hold the "Word Up"!*

"Blessed are they that are merciful; for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7).

I was finally in fourth grade, which meant I was old enough to play Pop Warner tackle football. I asked my friend, Charles Tinney, to join me in going out for the team and while less enthusiastic, he finally relented because of my persistence. One day before practice we were playing "Toss Up and Smear" and soon this turned into a pushing match between the combatants, Charles and me. We were quickly surrounded by players chanting, "Fight! Fight! Fight!" With a desire to be accepted by these older boys, I answered their shouts. After beating him up, Charles and I never spoke again. By offering no mercy to my friend, I traded him in for acceptance.

My pride stood unforgivingly between mercy and self-love. In choosing to fight, I instantly deemed Charles worth sacrificing. Mercy was not in my nature. Maybe mercy is not in any of our natures, given the choice between ourselves and others. If so, that was why Jesus addressed mercy as one of His Beatitudes (defined as "supreme blessedness"). It's nonsensical that Christ would grant "supreme blessedness" for natural (or common) behavior.

Mercy is defined as "compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm," so it is always initiated by the individual in the position of power. It's been said, "Grace is getting what you don't deserve. Mercy is not getting what you do deserve." We trust that mercy will be applied when we stand before Christ to be judged. Alma 42:25 asks, "What, do you suppose that mercy can rob justice?" Jesus reconciled the demands of justice when He willingly stood between us and our "getting what we deserve."

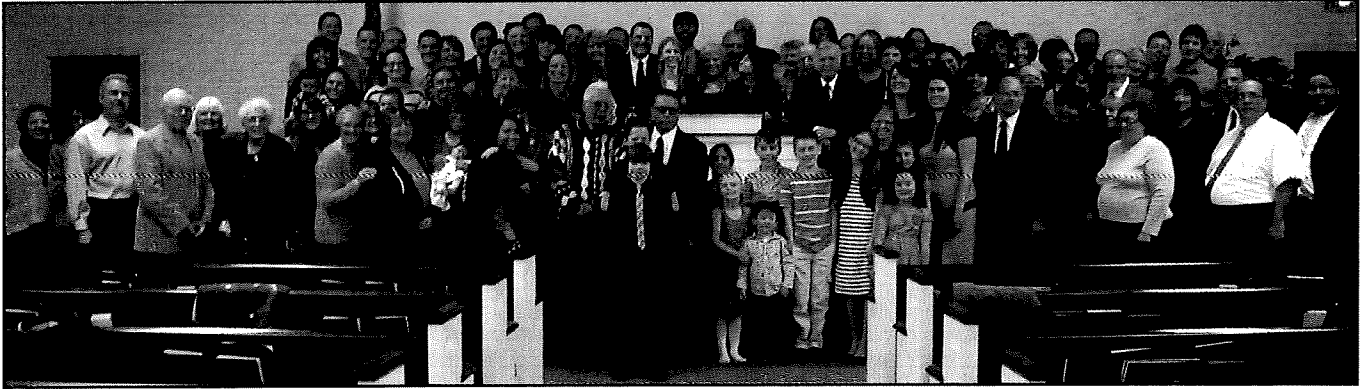
Years ago I was given the opportunity to apply mercy to one who didn't deserve what he received, and I failed. If I had simply chosen mercy in dealing with Charles, I may have spared him the humiliation of the event and myself the humiliation that still haunts me in so selfishly losing a friend. The sounds of cheers and approval for me were the jeers and taunts that sent Charles away in tears. Mercy could have spared us both an embarrassment that resulted from a momentary, self-serving decision. When mercy has no part, justice's demands hurt deeply.

For those who choose mercy, Christ promises they will "obtain mercy." The mercy obtained trades guilt and grief of merciless acts for the soothing, merciful words of Christ, "Well done, enter in!" And that is the ultimate in "supreme blessedness!"

Do you have a favorite verse you'd like us to dissect? Please send it in to: "Word Up"

MB Meet the Branch

The NEW CREEKSIDE, MI BRANCH



In the 1930s, the increasing membership in Detroit Branch #1 and the long travel time for some of the saints, raised the need for another church location. In November 1933, a building was rented at the corner of McDougall and Gratiot on the east side of Detroit, and the East Side Mission was born. The membership quickly grew to include four elders, and the mission became a branch.

Detroit Branch #3, later renamed Plumbrook Branch, was officially organized in July 1935 with Brother Pasquale DiBattista as presiding elder. Having already raised a majority of the money, the purchase of a building was approved in 1937. The purchase took place in 1938 and the building was dedicated on May 1st of that year.

As more of the members of the four Detroit branches began moving north out of the city in the 1960s, the need for a mission in the Warren and Sterling Heights area became apparent. After a few years of trial Sunday meetings in a local elementary school and later at a nursing home, in May 1972 the schedule expanded to include Wednesday night meetings and an organized Sunday School.

The Sterling Heights mission, with Brother Reno Bologna as our first presiding elder, was officially formed in June of 1972 and became a branch that September. After tireless fundraising by the saints, a building was purchased in February 1975 and dedicated on April 13, 1975.

As the needs of the congregation changed and the aging members of the Sterling Heights branch found it difficult to meet in a building with no handicapped access, the idea of a merger was considered. The two branches had been recently enjoying a wonderful increase in fellowship activities. In the last months of 2013, the subject was discussed with the members of both branches and was well received. Officially approved early this year, joint meetings began and have proven to be very blessed. Still in Sterling Heights (Michigan's fourth largest city), the new branch meets at the building of the former Plumbrook Branch. A rejuvenated Spirit has been felt by all and with a new soul coming to God and requesting baptism on March 23, our membership has already increased. Please keep us in your prayers as we continue to grow as a branch in the Spirit of God.

General Church Conference Continued from Page 1

immediately thanked God. He then heard the words, *"No smell of smoke. No smell of smoke."* Brother Bob related that this was just like the three Hebrew children, *"...upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, not the smell of fire had passed on them"* (Daniel 3:27). When he shared this, a brother spoke in the Spirit saying, *"Thus saith the Lord, 'Fear not the flames...I will protect you.'"*

Brother Bob talked about the trials that we may be facing, and how we should not look at the flames but look to the Lord to deliver us. Shortly afterward, another brother spoke in the Spirit, saying, *"The Lord will not put anything before you that He will not prepare the way for."* I'm certain I was not alone as I pondered whether my trials have me stinking of smoke, or coming through unharmed and untouched.

Reason 5: Building and Strengthening Relationships—At any given moment you can see people greeting each other with a holy kiss and a warm embrace, and you can almost feel the love radiate from one being to another. Maybe they just saw each other last week, or maybe it has been many years. The bonds that we share and the relationships that we build at Church events are strong. We may not know the details of each other's lives, or even see each other more than once or twice a year, but we know that we love and serve the same God, and this common essence of who we are connects us. The relationships we make with the brothers and sisters in this Church will last a lifetime. They are our support when the flames of life can be all around us. Additionally, a trip to Conference will strengthen your relationship with your family and friends who travel there with you.

For all of these reasons, I completely enjoyed my time at Conference. As the gathering came to an end, Apostle Joel Gehly shared a few thoughts with us. *"We are in a period of time in this world that is very, very difficult. I know that as I sat here and looked out, everyone has different flames. All of us have flames. We need to appreciate the fact that Jesus Christ is there for each of us through the flames. Encourage your family and loved ones to be a part of this glorious Kingdom. There is so much to be thankful for today."*

Consider a trip to Conference (or Campout, or really any Church activity!) and enjoy the blessings of God. You will not be disappointed.

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Wonderful Address by Moroni

The following article presents three verses taken from the wonderful address by the prophet Moroni to the inhabitants of the earth in the latter days. Keep in mind that he wrote these words shortly after the complete destruction of his people, the Nephites.

"...hearken unto the words of the Lord, and ask the Father in the name of Jesus for what things soever ye shall stand in need. Doubt not, but be believing, and begin as in times of old, and come unto the Lord with all your heart, and work out your own salvation with fear and trembling before him." (Mormon 9:27)

This verse beautifully describes the process by which we are drawn toward the Lord and His salvation. How often have we heard the testimonies of those who became overjoyed when they first learned that our Father in heaven actually answers our prayers!

It reminds me of my own conversion, which took place more than a quarter century ago. I can vividly recall those days as a young person when I began to exercise my faith through prayer. I remember trying with all my might to push all doubts out of my mind as I asked for miracles in my life.

One of my frequent prayer requests was that the Lord would place upon me a spirit of repentance so that I could ask for my baptism. For several months, this was a regular part of my evening prayer. Finally, during testimony service on a beautiful Sunday in May, the Spirit of God fell on me so powerfully that I stood, weeping uncontrollably, and asked for my baptism. I can only describe that feeling that came over me as a combination of extreme humility and exquisite joy.

"Be wise in the days of your probation; strip yourselves of all uncleanness; ask not, that ye may consume it on your lusts, but ask with a firmness unshaken, that ye will yield to no temptation, but that ye will serve the true and living God." (Mormon 9:28)

Here Moroni clarifies the manner in which we should pray. Does God want us to ask for His blessings in all aspects of our lives? Yes. However, we should not be asking God for an excess of material pleasures in order to satisfy our natural desires. Instead, our pleas should be that He would "deliver us from evil" and keep us on the path that leads to the Tree of Life.

"See that ye are not baptized unworthily; see that ye partake not of the sacrament of Christ unworthily; but see that ye do all things in worthiness, and do it in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God; and if ye do this, and endure to the end, ye will in nowise be cast out." (Mormon 9:29)

To be in a state of unworthiness means to be undeserving or not appropriate. When we serve God, doing all things in humility and sincerity is essential. What is there to be gained if we partake of the Lord's Supper unworthily? The scripture tells us that we are hurting our own souls.

Therefore we should do all things in the name of Jesus; when we work, when we play, when we eat, and when we go to bed, we should do it all in the name of our Lord. And if we keep our promise to serve Him all the remaining days of our lives, we will surely enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Faith Love/Charity Hope Unity Righteousness Congruence
 Responsibility Empathy Loyalty Leadership **Honor** Rights/Respect Duty

VALUES By Evangelist Frank Natoli

Value: Honor

Definition: Special esteem or respect, given or received

Vital Verses:

- "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:20).
- "And they did all, both they who had been healed and they who were whole, bow down at his feet, and did worship him; and as many as could come for the multitude did kiss his feet, insomuch that they did bathe his feet with their tears" (III Nephi 17:10).

Scriptural Example:

The Word of God directs us to show honor toward a number of people: our parents, the aged, and those in authority. It speaks of the honor between a husband and wife in marriage and even of a group of people who are deserving of "double honor," those who labor in furthering the Church. But we also understand that all honor belongs to God and His son Jesus Christ because God prepared a plan of salvation that included the sacrifice of His only son for the sins of every man and woman. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

Life Application:

There are a variety of medals awarded to members of the U.S. military for various reasons – the Silver Medal, Distinguished Service Cross, Purple Heart, and the Bronze Star, to name a few. But for those special individuals who perform an act of valor above and beyond the call of duty, the Medal of Honor is awarded. This medal is the United States of America's highest military honor and is only awarded by the President of the United States.

Do you know anyone who has performed an act of valor above and beyond the call of duty, worthy to be honored? Isn't Christ the ultimate example of someone who battled the enemy of our soul? Who willingly suffered and gave His life that we might have life? Who conquered death and was victorious over the grave that we might have salvation?

Instead of "honoring" Christ with a medal presented by a dignitary, we are privileged to honor Him through our willingness to enter into a covenant (repentance and baptism) and thereby serve Him in surrendering our will to Him, that His Spirit (the gift of the Holy Ghost) might direct our choices and decisions in life. Honoring Jesus Christ through the way we live our lives is the greatest way we can show our love, respect, and gratitude. It's our honesty, integrity, and truthfulness, in every action, behavior, and thought that reflects our sincerity.

Points to Ponder:

- How well do you honor your parents, the aged, your boss, your marriage, the elders of the Church, and most importantly, the Lord, Jesus Christ?
- Do you sometime find that it's easier to "honor" or respect celebrities or the wealthy or influential people in comparison to the Lord? Why is that?

Try to imagine the smile on the Lord's face when you "honor" Him through your actions, words, and thoughts.

Presented originally on the Gospel Blog

Sowing Seeds in Colombia By Evangelist Richard Scaglione, Sr.

Matthew 13:3,7 - "A sower went forth to sow. Some (seeds) fell into good ground..." The words of Christ's parable became reality as Brothers Nestor Gomez and Richard Scaglione, Sr., and Brother Lawrence and Sister Sylvia King traveled to Colombia from November 15 to 26, 2013. Their itinerary called for visits to Bogota, Armenia, Cali, and Santander. Contacts from previous missionary visits were provided with hopes of reaching most of them. Brother Pedro Cuellar, the resident Elder from Armenia, met the team at the airport in Bogota.

The next day the planting of the seeds began and didn't stop until the final day of the trip. Following is a summary list of the highlights enjoyed throughout the trip:

- Over 50 adults were reached in meetings, home visits, and casual contacts.
- Over 40 teenagers and small children were also reached.
- In addition to the four cities mentioned above, visits were also made to Tulua and Caloto.
- After the team handed out invitations in Santander for an evening meeting, 12 visitors came

to the meeting. All expressed feeling the Spirit of God and shared the love.

- In every location, home visits were made and fellowship was enjoyed. Many heard of the Gospel and the beliefs of The Church of Jesus Christ for the first time.
- Church beliefs were openly discussed and invitations to attend meetings were given. Many promised to attend meetings in the future.
- Anointings for afflictions and prayers for strength and guidance were plentiful.



(Continued on Page 7)

Young People in Bell Surrender to Christ

By Brother Anthony Cardinale

The Bell Branch family is so grateful to the Lord for calling four of our dear young people into His spiritual flock. They were hard-won victories. There was something noticeably similar about the spiritual warfare they were all engaged in prior to being baptized.

The battles were marked by vivid confrontation with Satan that each one had to endure. There were nightmares, disturbing visions, and physical attacks that tried to derail what they knew to be the prompting of the Holy Spirit to surrender to God. Each one came to the stark realization that the Gospel message is not a story of long ago past fables, and they were not just joining a religious organization. They were to be soldiers for Christ! The warfare was personal, up-front, and in-their-face real, but they were not afraid. They were trained to know that they "are more than conquerors" through Christ.

There was another shared trend. The same day the first young man was baptized, another young man asked to be baptized, and the day the second young man was baptized, the third candidate asked to be baptized. Ultimately, the day when the third young man was baptized, a young sister asked to be baptized! Even though the young people are close, they each overcame their own battles and surrendered to Christ on their appointed days.

On November 17, 2013, Brother Alex Castro was baptized. He had been a member of the LDS church, but he was seeking for greater truth. This search led him to the General Church website. Subsequently, he contacted the Bell Branch and followed up with a visit. He fell in love with the Church doctrine and family, and we fell in love with him. He has a dedicated desire to seek truth and to serve God.

During the prayer offered prior to Brother Alex entering the waters of baptism, a sister saw a cloud and Brother Alex on top of that cloud. Afterward, the cloud came down and a great light covered his face to the extent that his face was no longer visible. Also, when Brother David Arreola was baptizing Alex, it was seen that it was actually Jesus Christ in a white gown performing the baptism. Later, when prayer was offered upon departing the baptismal site, it was seen that an illuminating white gown covered Brother Alex, just as Jesus was seen to be wearing earlier.

On December 21, 2013, Brother Moroni Bojorquez was baptized. He testified that he had resisted the devil's attacks to discourage and frighten him, and he was not intimidated. The devil had appeared to him, but Moroni told him to leave and that he was not afraid of him. At the time of his baptism, a white gown was seen to be placed upon him. As closing prayer was offered, a man illuminated in white walked among the brothers and sisters. Later, in the service at Church, the same personage was seen on the rostrum as the ministry preached. Furthermore, when hands were laid upon him for the reception of the Holy Ghost, a sister saw a bright light appear over Brother Moroni's head.

On January 15, 2014, Brother Armando Martinez was baptized. He is only 14 years old but is no longer inexperienced in spiritual warfare. He had evil nightmares and physical attacks that he endured prior to baptism. The ministry and congregation had prayed frequently for him, as we felt the Holy Spirit calling him and heard of the opposition from the enemy. When he broke down and asked for his baptism, the Church family cried for joy with him. When he was baptized, one sister saw a white dove over him, and another sister saw that the minister's arm, which was raised to baptize him, was white and illuminated. When the Holy Spirit was conferred upon Brother Armando, an illuminating white light covered him and the entire ministry.

On February 16, 2014, young Sister Ana Arreola was baptized. She is the daughter of Elder David Arreola and his wife, Imelda. Her younger sister, Jessenia, had been baptized a few years earlier; however, Ana would say that she had no intention of being baptized any time soon. That is, until the Lord overwhelmed her with love and support. The Lord helped her overcome a serious medical issue prior to her asking for her baptism. When she was baptized by Brother David, a sister saw two bright lights come upon them. Also, as Brother Justin Paxon offered closing prayer, a rose was seen ascending up to heaven.

Praise God for His mercy towards the young people of the Bell Branch. The war wages on in these the last days for many other souls that have yet to render obedience unto Christ. The battles seem to be more intense than ever, but with that comes a greater portion of His Spirit to combat that opposition. The Bell Branch family thanks God that He has granted unto us these four victories!

Sowing Seeds in Colombia Continued from Page 6

- Testimonies, experiences, and blessings were shared by members and visitors.
- Blessings were pronounced on most of the children during the visits.
- The love of God and the acceptance of the missionaries was felt in every home.
- A missionary's joyful reunion with members in Bogota after a 5-year absence.
- An action scene occurred during a meeting when a young "David" was told he could defeat a large "Goliath" because of his faith and confidence in his God.
- Discussions and training sessions with the resident Elder were intended to strengthen and lend encouragement.
- The curiosity of many hotel staff workers and restaurant personnel was satisfied when they heard about The Church and the reason for the missionaries' presence.
- One taxi driver in Bogota and one in Armenia were contracted to do all the driving. Both offered their availability for future trips.
- The Armenia driver (Alberto) stayed with the missionaries and provided many contacts with relatives in Cali, Santander, and Tulua and shared the blessings of the home visits. He expressed interest in baptism.
- A portable amplifier and microphone were purchased to send music and preaching throughout the Church neighborhood. These can be used in all of the Church locations.
- The property in Santander was visited, and the potential for a future building was discussed.
- The Colombia Facebook page was updated. The use of available technology was stressed which will allow an exchange of photos, videos, etc. between Colombia and the U.S. sermons, singing, and special programs can be shared at no cost.
- Many photos have been downloaded and can be viewed via e-mail and Facebook. This will give the viewer a clear picture of the blessings that cannot be expressed in words.

In summary, strangers soon became friends through God's Spirit. Invitations were given in anticipation of future visits. Wonderful people and loving children brought great blessings through God's love. Many seeds were sown. As they are nurtured, an abundance of fruit can be expected.

I'll Believe Whatever You Say *By Elder Tom D'Orazio*

A very long time ago, there was this old man in Texas—small house, small neighborhood, rough surroundings. He used to run a gas station or something like that. Not a glamorous life. In his later years, his wife got sick. Then he began to get sick too. So much so that he really couldn't get out of the house too often. He did belong to the largest church in the whole area; big buildings and lots of people and only three blocks away. He used to walk there, but no more. His legs were giving out. Even if he got there, he definitely couldn't sit through a meeting at church without his ailment flaring up and forcing him back home. So he gave up on church and stayed home.

It was this way for years when one day, and for no particular reason, he began to not only wonder about going back to church but about church in general. He was a very simple man. There was never anything complicated or intricate about his life or thoughts. However, he began to wonder about "truth." Did it exist? Was there something most true? This is important because it would seem only logical that someone like him, when he felt to make church more important again, would just return to that place only a few blocks away. He didn't. This wonderfully simple man prayed a simple prayer. He asked the Lord to show him truth. He asked the Lord to bring truth to his door.

There is another side to this story because two worlds were about to collide. Some years earlier, a visionary brother was inspired by an idea for the GMBA. This idea was called "Youth in Action." Its purpose was to provide an opportunity and training ground for young missionaries to learn and grow. Simply, young adults would donate a week or more of their summer time to evangelize the Gospel of Christ, contribute to local communities, and perform charitable works. It was a wonderfully noble cause. It was a rousing success. Then, and without much more detail here, the leaders of this program were inspired one year to hold a "tour" (as they were called) in Texas.

So here we are. A kid from Michigan or Pennsylvania or California flies to Texas in the dead of summer. Then they find themselves passing out fliers

to the local neighborhood inviting people for prayer, or to a special meeting, or a picnic, or Vacation Bible School or to just "come and see." They come to a door. This door is no different than the many others they have canvassed. They all look the same, but each and every one hides an absolute unknown inside. On this particular day and at that particular moment, two plans became one.

You see, that old man was inside his house praying that special prayer. At the end, he promised the Lord that if He showed him truth, he would believe. It was really that simple. Soon after he got up, he heard a noise at his door, and there was a flier. He opened and read "Come to a Church of Miracles." At that moment, the Spirit of God poured down on this man, and with that flier in his hand, he was converted. I personally have never seen anything like this before or since. He asked us to come to his house. We did. Sitting in his living room he told us this "unbelievable" story. Over the course of the discussion, we tried and tried to tell him about this or that—about what our faith and doctrine contained, about our scriptures, about anything one could think of when you are introducing the Church to someone, but he just kept interrupting us, and with complete, child-like faith, he proclaimed "I'll believe whatever you say, God already told me this is true." In one meeting on that day, that man asked for his baptism and his life changed. What a powerful testimony he gave! His passionate testament to the grace and mercy of God ALWAYS brought us to tears. After many years of *always-attending* (remember what I wrote before? That's another story), he died true to his faith.

This true story highlights the potential impact of young people who give of their time and energy to the YIA program. Every summer, not only week-long, but month-long efforts are made all over the domestic U.S. to evangelize the gospel and uplift local communities. It is a noble and worthwhile cause. We call on our youth not to forget this cause and the impact you can make on yourself and others. We call on you to be diligent in study and prayer, to seek the Lord's direction, and to volun-

(Continued on Page 11)

Unity
Growth
Joy
Salvation

GMBA Camp 2014
California, Pennsylvania

Camp 490

John the Baptist *By Brother Kerry Carlini*

Calling two of his disciples unto him, John the Baptist would instruct them to question Jesus as to whether or not He indeed was the Messiah. Odd, considering that John had earlier proclaimed Him the "Lamb of God." Jesus' response was simply, "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, (and) to the poor the gospel is preached." Addressing John's doubt, Jesus continued, "Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist." The following are five amazing facts about this amazing man, John:

- 1 Even within Elizabeth's womb, John had "leaped" in recognition of Jesus when Mary had entered the house of Zechariah.
- 2 Attracting multitudes of people, John nonetheless always understood that one "mightier" than he would come baptizing "with the Holy Ghost."
- 3 Considered "[m]uch more than a prophet," Jesus explained, "This is he, of whom is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare the way before thee."
- 4 Coupled to his own rejection, Jesus criticized the Jews, saying that "John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say. He hath a devil."
- 5 A reed not "shaken with the wind," John was eventually imprisoned and later beheaded for his stand against Herod's unlawful marriage to his brother's wife.

Malachi 3:1; Matthew Chapters 11:1-19 & 14:1-12; Mark 1:1-11; Luke Chapters 1 & 7:19-35



Ladies' Uplift Circle News

What is Your Vision?

By Sister Angela Yoder, General Ladies' Uplift Circle Editor

At our recent General Ladies' Uplift Circle conference, our President, Sister Lisa Champine, posed a question that really captured my attention, "What is your vision?" As I began to think about this, the following scripture in Proverbs 29:18 immediately came to my mind, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." While I realized that it was important to have goals for your life or your family, I don't think that I ever really thought about having a vision.

Is there a difference between having goals and having a vision? I believe there is. Everything begins with vision. You can't set a goal unless you have an idea of what you want to do or where you want to be. Unlike your goals, which typically have an exact task and end date, a vision evolves with you and does not have a deadline.

The majority of us take life as it comes. We can be so focused on approaching events and current situations that we often don't think in the long term. That's understandable, because the present affects us now. But broadening our vision leads to totality of being. If you try to create the life you want without knowing what steps to take, you'll constantly live falling short of your dreams. But how do you make your vision a reality? Creating your vision is a multi-step process.

The first step involves you defining your objectives and identifying the actions (goals) to be taken. Then you need to take a leap of faith and take the first step. Always remember to keep your eye on the prize, the end result, and not allow yourself to become distracted along the way. Simply having a vision does not fulfill it, you must work at it, understand that there may be bumps in the road, and don't let the obstacles discourage you. Instead, let them be stepping stones. Your perseverance will help you to succeed.

At our business meeting, we heard about the visions of several Church projects. One of those was regarding the new work in Calgary. I'm sure that the saints who have been working diligently in this field researched the area, set goals for their brief visits and carefully laid out their plans. Without their vision of spreading the Gospel to those in that part of the vineyard, how successful would they be? We also heard about a program for the young ladies of the Church, the Youth Enhancement Program. Our Youth Enhancement Officers have spent countless hours working to define and redesign this initiative. They documented their vision by creating a mission statement and purpose, and clearly identified their goals. It is because of their vision, and their dedication to that vision, that these works will continue.



God Has an Everlasting Plan

Genesis Chapters 6-9

The Lord said to Noah, "Come," and after his family entered the ark, God shut the doors, and the heavy rains began. It rained for forty days. Can you imagine how it must have felt when the ark lifted up and started floating? Would you be seasick from the waves, or tired of the cries of the animals as you worked to feed them?

The waters lasted on the earth a hundred and fifty days. That is almost half a year of ark



And the final miracle was God's promise. He said that while the earth remains, the seasons would come and go as they should...and He also promised that He would never again kill every living creature as He had done with this flood. Then God also made a rainbow of beautiful colors to shine in the sky as a reminder of his everlasting promise to all creatures. (See Genesis 9:12-17.) And that means you and me!

Our God is a faithful God. We can trust Him, pray to Him in the name of Jesus, know that He keeps all of His promises, not fear the future, and enjoy every rainbow we are lucky enough to see!

With love,
Your friend,
Sister Jan

WORD SEARCH

NOAH	A	DID
AND	HUGE	IT
THE	ARK	SOUND
FAMILY	OF	AS
TRUSTED	SMELLY	THE
GOD	WILD	STORM
THEY	WATCHFUL	RAGED
LIVED	ANIMALS	RAINS
IN	HOW	

A	N	I	M	A	L	S	L	R
A	S	R	A	G	E	D	U	A
D	L	I	W	D	H	N	F	I
E	G	U	H	I	T	U	H	N
T	A	R	K	D	Y	O	C	S
S	A	I	N	L	O	S	T	M
U	N	T	I	I	U	T	A	E
R	O	M	H	V	F	O	W	L
T	A	N	D	E	I	R	O	L
F	H	G	O	D	Y	M	H	Y

The Bible and Book of Mormon are made up of amazing stories that are filled with wonderful advice and never get old.

Way back in the beginning, after God created Adam and Eve, people lived for hundreds and hundreds of years. They had wonderful health! But these people started doing evil, mean things to each other. God looked down and hated what He saw going on. Only one man, Noah, was serving God and living the good way. (He lived to be 950 years old, and had three sons at 500 years old.)

God realized that these bad people in the old world were not going to change. He called Noah a preacher of righteousness (See II Peter 2:4-7) so we know Noah told them about God.

After many warnings, God decided to bring a flood upon the world of the ungodly, bad people. He was going to destroy everything. But first, Noah had a lot of work to do.

God told him he was going to unlock the water in the heavens and the earth and flood the whole world. He told Noah to build a huge ship (called an ark) and gather small flocks of seven of each kind of birds, herds of seven of all clean animals, all crawling animals, and pairs of all the unclean animals. (See Genesis 7:1-4.) God said to collect food for his family and the animals. Out of the human race, only eight people, Noah, his wife, his three sons, and their wives, would be saved.

Can you imagine how other people marveled, made fun of, or came and watched them build this huge ship over the years? It was three stories high, longer than a football field, and over 75 feet wide. What did they think as the years rolled by and Noah's family collected every creature they could?

God told Noah to put waterproof pitch on the inside and outside as they built and gathered all creatures. No one else in the whole wide world was to serve God and be good, kind, and caring people.

living. Then God made a wind to pass over the earth stopped the waters and in the tenth month, they could see the tops of mountains! Noah opened the one window and let a bird out, hoping it would find a tree and stay. But it flew back and forth. A week passed, he sent a dove out. Not yet.

Another week of waiting and this time when he sent the dove out, it came back carrying a leaf from an olive tree. The flood was drying up! Can you imagine how happy Noah's family was?

A few days later, the ark touched ground and Noah was told they could leave. He set up a special thank you service for God and sacrificed one of each kind of clean beasts. (Remember, there were seven of each going in and perhaps more had been born of each species in the last year and a half.) Can you imagine the excited barks, growls, yips, bellows, neighs, chirping, cawing, and trumpeting sounds that the animals made when they were freed?

"How I feel about being a father..."

Being a father to me is such a blessing. We adopted our son when he was 5 but he came to live with us when he was 2½. I love sharing this gift that God has given to us with our son. Brother Don, Brunswick, ME Branch

I am very thankful for the privilege to be a father. My two boys are constantly teaching me how to believe, trust, and love with pure and unconditional intent. The innocence of a child?! I love you, Ben & Noah! Brother Jim Draskovich, Forest Hills, FL Branch

It is one of the most blessed and rewarding experiences I have ever known.
Brother Darryl Onorato, Brunswick, ME Branch

Our son is a true Gift of God's Love!! Told that we could not have children, we consider him to be a miracle we thank God DAILY for. Because we love him dearly, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is our son's inheritance that we have to pass on to him. Brother Rob Beeman, Mt. Laurel, NJ Branch

Being a father is a great honor, but when I met the Church when they were 5, 4, and 3 years old it became a greater responsibility. I've watched them each get baptized, along with my son-in-law and daughter-in-law. There is no greater reward than seeing all the spiritual work that you put into raising your children. Brother Angelo Zaino, Edison, NJ Branch

Giving my son the Church and this wonderful Church family is my biggest joy in raising him. It is such a blessing to watch him even at four years old looking forward to dressing up for Church and even singing his favorite songs. It makes me feel so good to give him the Church as a gift, just as my parents gave it to me! Brother Marc Zaino, Mt. Laurel, NJ Branch

There is nothing in life that makes me more proud than to be the father of my children and I thank God every day for that honor. Just as God is proud of us when we submit to His will, words cannot express the joy I feel that my children (those who are of an age of accountability) have chosen to follow Christ. As a father, I could ask for nothing more! Brother Thomas P. Liberto, San Diego, CA Branch

Being a father is a great responsibility, that I might be a shining example my children can up look to and see who Jesus is. That they may live their lives according to the principles that Jesus laid down for them! It is up to me to show them by my example that Jesus is real! Brother George Katsaras, Miami-Homestead, FL Mission

I'll Believe Whatever You Say Continued from Page 8

teer often to further His work. We call on branches and missions to volunteer your time, location, and resources to host a tour. We ask the parents to encourage and permit your children to participate. We ask all to pray diligently for impact and success.

This year, there are three tours: Spartanburg, SC (July 19-27), Herndon, VA (July 19-27), and Yucaipa, CA (July 26-August 3). If you are a young person between the ages of 15-25 years and feel serious about the call, please contact our YIA team at: Registration@gmbayouthinaction.org. If anyone wishes to offer financial support, please contact our YIA team to make your tax-deductible donation. For everyone, please join us in prayer that each and every participant, host branch/mission, and community will be blessed.



...for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. Isaiah 35:6

Blessing Bits

BB Instant Healing

I was on a Sunday in February 2014 when I awoke and felt an infection in my body. I went to church and I could feel it getting worse. I couldn't wait to be anointed and as soon as our presiding elder, Brother Ed Buccellato, came in, I told him that I wanted to be anointed right away. He immediately anointed me, offering up a beautiful, humble prayer, and the infection went away completely! I have never felt such immediate peace. Sometimes after being anointed, pain begins to go away, but this was immediate and I was able to enjoy the rest of the day. I thank God over and over for this blessing.— *Sister Linda Reynolds Simi Valley, CA Branch*

BB Language Is No Barrier

I had a desire to translate a book written in Spanish regarding a vision had by Brother Pasquale Cocciolo, an Elder who lives in Argentina. Pasquale is the nephew of Sister Maria Madaffri from Beaumont, TX. God compelled Brother Pasquale to write his vision and some experiences, but Sister Maria was unable to read it since it was in Spanish. Although I only had three years of Spanish classes over 45 years ago, I desired to translate it. I struggled many times to do so with little success. Eventually, I became frustrated and gave up. A year

later, the sorrow of my brother and sister was great because the book had not been translated. I went to the Lord in prayer for assistance and then tried once again. When I would reach a part where the translated words didn't make any sense, I would pray. Then, as I continued, the sentence would become clear in my mind. As I worked, the translating became easier and easier, but I still had to depend on the Lord's help until the end. As I would translate sections, I would call Sister Maria and read it to her. She would cry with the blessings of God and tell me that what I had translated sounded just like how Pasquale spoke. I praise God for enabling me to translate this book.— *Sister Karen Watford, Conroe, TX*

BB God Heals Our Afflictions

In one of our recent Sunday worship services, we heard the testimony of a 17-year-old boy who had been diagnosed with a tumor in his stomach. The doctors told his parents that he needed to have surgery. The relatives asked the doctor if they could take him to church to be prayed for before the operation. The doctor agreed, and the relatives brought the young boy to our Church, requesting prayer for him. We anointed him and prayed that God would perform a miracle to show God's power of healing that is in

The Church of Jesus Christ, and that it would also be a testimony not only for him but also the family and for everyone who knew him. A few days before the surgery was scheduled, the doctor decided to take another scan, and to their amazement, they found the tumor had disappeared completely. No surgery was scheduled. The family came to Church and testified of this miraculous healing for their son, giving God praise!—*Brother Chalwe - President of the Church in Zambia*


Send us your Blessing Bits [in approximately 150 words] and answer the Question of the Month by contacting us at gospelnewsinfo@gmail.com

Q

Question for this month: *"What is a scripture topic, series of lessons, or theme your branch or mission has studied that you really enjoyed or has made a difference in you spiritually?"*

A

Answer from last month: *"If you could be present for an event from the scriptures, what would it be?"*
The number one answer was "When Jesus resurrected!" Check back next month to read the responses.



...for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. Isaiah 35:6